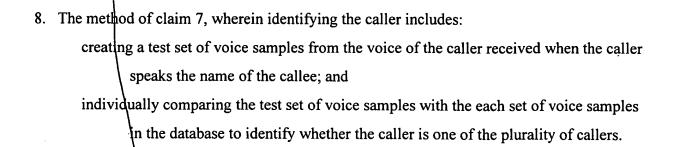What is claimed is:

1. A method of screening a caller prior to establishing a telephone connection between the caller and a callee, the method comprising:

receiving a telephone call from the caller;

prompting the caller to speak the name of the callee;

receiving the name of the callee when spoken by the caller; and

identifying the caller by analyzing the voice of the caller received when the caller speaks the name of the callee.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

determining whether the caller is authorized to be directly connected to the callee; and

routing the telephone call to a telephone terminal for the callee if the caller is authorized to be directly connected to the callee.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising routing the telephone call to a message recording system if the caller is unauthorized to be directly connected to the callee.

4. The method of claim 2, further comprising disconnecting the telephone call if the caller is unauthorized to be directly connected to the callee.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein prompting the caller to speak the name of the callee is done using a synthesized voice.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the name of the callee includes receiving electrical audio signals representing the name of the callee as spoken by the caller.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising creating a database containing multiple sets of digital voice samples, wherein each set within the multiple sets contains at least one digital voice sample for a different one of a plurality of callers.

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8. The method of claim 7, wherein identifying the caller includes:

creating a test set of voice samples from the voice of the caller received when the caller speaks the name of the callee; and

individually comparing the test set of voice samples with the each set of voice samples in the database to identify whether the caller is one of the plurality of callers.

9. A method of routing a telephone call to a callee comprising:

receiving the telephone call from a caller;

prompting the caller to speak the name of the callee;

receiving the name of the callee when spoken by the caller;

identifying the callee by analyzing the voice of the caller received when the caller speaks the name of the callee; and

routing the telephone call to the callee so identified.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising routing the telephone call to a message recording system if the callee is unable to receive the telephone call.

11. The method of claim 9, wherein prompting the caller to speak the name of the callee is done using a synthesized voice.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein receiving the name of the callee includes receiving electrical audio signals representing the name of the callee as spoken by the caller.

13. The method of claim 9, further comprising creating a database containing a plurality of digital text files, wherein each of the plurality of digital text files contains identification information for a different one of a plurality of callees.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the each of the plurality of digital text files is in ASCII format, and wherein the identification information includes the name of the callee.

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15. The method of claim 14, wherein the identification information further includes a telephone extension number for the callee.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein identifying the caller includes:

converting the name of the callee as spoken by the caller into a test digital text file; and

individually comparing the test digital text file with the each of the plurality of digital text files in the database to identify the callee.

17. A digital call assistant system interfaced between a first telephone unit operated by a caller and a second telephone unit operated by a callee, the digital call assistant system comprising:

a voice recognition module coupled to the first telephone unit, wherein the voice recognition module is configured to receive a telephone call from the caller and in response prompt the caller to speak the name of the callee; and

a database unit coupled to the voice recognition module, wherein the database unit is configured to store therein multiple sets of digital voice samples, wherein each set within the multiple sets contains at least one digital voice sample for a different one of a plurality of callers.

18. The digital call assistant system of claim 17, wherein the voice recognition module is configured to prompt the caller using a synthesized voice.

19. The digital call assistant system of claim 17, wherein the voice recognition module is configured to receive the name of the callee when spoken by the caller and to create a test set of voice samples from the voice of the caller received when the caller speaks the name of the callee, wherein the voice recognition module is further configured to instruct the database unit to individually compare the test set of voice samples with the each set of voice samples stored therein to identify whether the caller is one of the plurality of callers.

20. The digital call assistant system of claim 19, further comprising a call routing module coupled to the voice recognition module, wherein the call routing module is configured to route the telephone call to a destination specified by the voice recognition module.

21. The digital call assistant system of claim 20, wherein the voice recognition module is configured to determine whether the caller is authorized to directly place the telephone call to the second telephone unit prior to specifying the destination to the call routing module.

22. The digital call assistant system of claim 20, wherein the destination includes one of the second telephone unit; and a message recording system for the caller to leave a voice message for the callee.

23. The digital call assistant system of claim 20, wherein the call routing module is implemented in one of the following:
    a switch in a telephone company central office;
    a switch in a private branch exchange;
    an SSP (service switching point) switch in an advanced intelligent network; and
    a mobile switching center in a wireless network.

24. The digital call assistant system of claim 17, wherein the database unit is configured to store a plurality of digital text files, wherein each of the plurality of digital text files contains identification information for a different one of a plurality of callees.

25. The digital call assistant system of claim 24, wherein the voice recognition module is configured to receive the name of the callee when spoken by the caller and to convert the name of the callee as spoken by the caller into a test digital text file, and wherein the voice recognition module is further configured to instruct the database unit to individually compare the test digital text file with the each of the plurality of digital text files in the database to identify the callee.

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26. The digital call assistant system of claim 17, wherein the voice recognition module is implemented in one of the following devices:

an intelligent peripheral in a wireless network;

a switch in a telephone company central office;

a switch in a private branch exchange; and

a service node in an advanced intelligent network.